



COMMONWEALTH  
ACADEMY

Strategic Plan  
2009–2014

EMPOWER THE CHILD.

## head's message




### DEAR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF COMMONWEALTH ACADEMY,

We are pleased to present you with the Commonwealth Academy Strategic Plan for 2009–2014. This plan has been an important element of the Board's activities for the past year and celebrates our substantial growth and development over the past ten years. It sets out specific steps to secure our future as a model school serving students with AD/HD and learning differences. The plan is built on four key strategic priorities that are defined and presented simply and directly. These priorities must be understood and embraced by our Board, our faculty and administration, our parents, students, and the community that we serve. The priorities are ambitious, but they are not unrealistic.

Commonwealth Academy has already begun to make progress in executing the initiatives that flow from our goals and priorities, and we welcome your enthusiasm and your help as we pursue our vision. The careful and focused work that we undertake during the next five years will enhance the growth and development of Commonwealth Academy and the ever-increasing communities we serve.

We need the support of the entire Commonwealth community to implement our Strategic Plan and accomplish its goals. The Strategic Plan is a living document and we look forward to your ideas to enhance and amend it as time and events require. You can be assured that the faculty and administration and the Board are fully committed to the vision of our future embodied in the Plan. We are grateful for your ideas and support.

  
Susan J. Johnson, PhD  
Head of School

## vision

Commonwealth Academy is a coeducational college preparatory day school for average to superior students who benefit from small classes and instruction designed to address various learning styles, including those students who have organizational, attention, or learning differences.

We empower students to reach their highest achievement levels, reflective of their true potential, by teaching personal responsibility for learning and behavior in a comfortable community, conducive to academic risk-taking and social success. We offer a broad-based curriculum, compensatory strategies, and a focus on technology to prepare our students for the challenges of college, career and life pursuits.



## strategic priorities

These four key strategic priorities will be executed by the school within a five-year time frame. The Plan will be reviewed periodically throughout each year and reported on at the Board's annual retreat. Committee reports will be presented on an as-needed basis. Strategic priorities and initiatives will be dropped or added as circumstances dictate.

### FOUR KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- ▶ Expand current program to become a model year-round learning center for students in Grades 4 and above with AD/HD or learning differences.
- ▶ Establish a self-sustaining admission stream whereby the maximum capacity is reached and acceptances by qualified students equal or exceed the number of students graduating or leaving the school.
- ▶ Ensure the accessibility and permanence of Commonwealth Academy.
- ▶ Commonwealth Academy will become the ideal school for well-trained, professional faculty and staff dedicated to servicing students with learning disabilities and AD/HD.

# educational program



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Expand current program to become a model year-round center for learning for students in Grades 4 and above with AD/HD or LD.

## FIVE-YEAR INITIATIVES

1. Add Grades 4 and 5.
2. Continue to evaluate, and refine as necessary, current college prep program for Grades 6–12.
3. Develop and implement a college transition program for non-current C/A students from local high schools and/or community colleges.

## STRATEGIES

### *Add Grades 4 and 5*

This program will cater to language-based, learning disabled students with the intent to close or minimize the gaps in skill development so that they will be prepared to join our grade-level program in middle school.

- ▶ The program will provide remediation in basic skills for Grades 4 and 5, and students in Grade 6 as needed.
- ▶ Specifically trained speech and language therapists and reading specialists will incorporate a variety of reading remediation approaches to decoding and comprehension.
- ▶ Math will be taught by a trained classroom teacher who will provide diagnostic-prescriptive instruction.

### *Evaluate and Refine Program for Grades 6–12*

- ▶ Constantly monitor our curriculum to ensure that program remains challenging and relevant.
- ▶ Under the leadership of the newly established technology committee of the Board of Trustees, develop a technology plan to continuously explore cutting edge technology and add or adapt to program as possible.
- ▶ Expand athletic program and summer program.

### *Transition Program*

Evaluate viability of a professional partnership to create and implement a part-time program that teaches the underlying skills necessary for success in college to high school and post-graduate students.

- ▶ Skills taught will include: understanding one's learning style, written expression, time-management, and use of technology.
- ▶ The program will provide access to neuropsychologists and psychologists for individual psycho-ed testing to help students understand their learning style.
- ▶ It will also provide referrals to area AD/HD coaches when needed.





### STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Increase admission stream so that the maximum capacity is reached and acceptances by qualified students equal the number of students graduating or leaving the school.

### FIVE-YEAR INITIATIVES

1. Increase networking to evaluators, psychologists, therapists, and tutors.
2. Increase contacts with private and parochial K–8 schools in the area.
3. Increase scholarship/financial aid to ensure economic and racial diversity, and gender balance representative of the population of students served by our mission.

### STRATEGIES

#### *Networking/Contacts*

- ▶ Increase staff time to support expanded networking activities.
- ▶ Expand opportunities for collaboration and contact between target audiences and C/A staff (e.g., workshops, lectures, etc.)
- ▶ Continue to participate in ongoing admission and educational fairs and conferences.

#### *Scholarship/Financial Aid*

- ▶ Work with Director of Marketing and Director of Advancement to seek grants and develop broad-based fundraising opportunities to increase funds for financial aid awards.
- ▶ As funds are available, develop plans to target students who could not attend C/A without a substantial grant.

# advancement

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Ensure the accessibility and permanence of Commonwealth Academy.

## FIVE-YEAR INITIATIVES

1. Perpetuate and increase the positive, accurate public awareness of our program.
2. Ensure the financial stability of the school so it is prepared to acquire a permanent location in Alexandria.

## STRATEGIES

### *Public Awareness*

- ▶ Develop an advisory council to the board made up of respected and prominent leaders in the Alexandria community.
- ▶ Grow current part-time advancement team to a full-time, adequately staffed and supported department
- ▶ Continue developing and improving CA web site and the use of electronic, web-based marketing opportunities
- ▶ Continue to expand marketing opportunities in surrounding, targeted geographic areas
- ▶ Develop partnerships with universities, corporations, and foundations

### *Diversity*

- ▶ Increase availability of financial aid in terms of number of families and amount of grants to equal 10% of the total budget.
- ▶ Prepare and execute a formal plan for seeking and receiving grants and/or scholarships from corporations, foundations, and/or universities.

### *Financial Stability*

- ▶ Enlist board members who are willing to actively lead and support advancement (education and fundraising) activities and campaigns.
- ▶ Reduce reliance on current families to cover the difference between tuition-based income and operating budget, as well as capital giving.
- ▶ Establish a collaborative infrastructure of board members, parents, faculty, students, and community members to prepare for the purchase of a permanent location (land/build, or remodel existing structure) that will open in the fall of 2018.
- ▶ Establish an endowment for a permanent campus.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Commonwealth Academy will be the ideal school for well-trained, professional faculty and staff dedicated to servicing students with learning disabilities and AD/HD. All faculty members will have obtained or be in the process of obtaining DOE Virginia licensing in their respective subject area and a Masters Degree by 2014.

## FIVE-YEAR INITIATIVES

1. Increase teacher and administrative base salaries to be competitive with AISGW schools of similar size.
2. All faculty members will develop a PIP (Professional Improvement Plan) that will outline their goals for DOE licensing and/or a Masters Degree.
3. Increase participation in relevant educational workshops or VAIS accreditation teams.

## STRATEGIES

### Salaries

- ▶ Provide competitive salaries/benefits and professional development opportunities to attract and retain competent faculty.
- ▶ Reference AISGW salary statistics for budget preparation

### Licensing & Advanced Degrees

- ▶ C/A will continue to provide the application fee and a tuition stipend (up to the equivalent of two graduate courses at a public university) for teacher certification courses.

- ▶ C/A will continue to provide a tuition stipend (up to the equivalent of two graduate courses at a public university) toward a relevant masters degree, followed by an annual stipend for an earned degree.

### Educational Workshops

- ▶ Faculty will be made aware of and encouraged to attend educational workshops that are paid for by C/A.
- ▶ Faculty will be encouraged to participate on accreditation teams through VAIS.
- ▶ Continue ongoing in-house training about recent LD and AD/HD research.
- ▶ Continue ongoing training in state-of-the-art technology and use of assistive technology in classroom instruction.
- ▶ Commonwealth Academy will seek to establish collaborative partnerships for teacher training and mentoring.

### Funding

- ▶ Targeted fundraising activities will be implemented to supplement tuition revenue and ensure adequate money for faculty development and training.





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